

Realization

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Passive Concentration and Finding the Self

The Philosophy ; The Requisite
Conditions ; Character of the
Phenomena ; Explanation ; The
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Methods.

Immortality, Preëxistence and Memory

Miscellany

BY

JOSEPH STEWART, LL.M.

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Realization

BY JOSEPH STEWART, LL.M.

VOL. I

JANUARY, 1901

NO. 2

Passive Concentration and Finding the Self.

The Philosophers of The Silence.

THE world has never been without its philosophers who have perceived and declared the golden virtue of silence, the revealing influences of solitude and introspection, and the benefits of quiescence and relaxation. From the ancient yoga who discovered the evidences of his subliminal self and conceived therefrom a philosophy of union with divinity, to the modern searcher for higher realization who observes his daily "silence" hour, there have ever been those who, consciously or unconsciously, have followed practices and modes of life which have disclosed to them the powers, the intuitions, and the grandeur of their deeper selves and brought them into closer conscious rapport with Universal Being.

Methods which have led to the result have varied from the habits of introspection fostered by a lonely habitat or vocation, the inspiration of forest or plain-solitudes, to the self-imposed system of mind training or the enforced silence of the hermitage. The results have been similar, varying only in degree of realization. The seekers have found what otherwise slumbers undiscovered; sometimes only awakened aspiration, often profound intuition, latent powers, and unused faculties, and occasionally the illuminating knowledge of higher states of consciousness.

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The Indispensable Condition Requisite for the Phenomenon

To the observer of law these instances were found, whether in history or in daily modern life, suggest a fact which, when we have appreciated its importance and considered it in connection with our modern knowledge of the nature of consciousness, leads to an important conclusion. It is, that the conditions always include one element which, though its importance may have been usually overlooked in favor of some more ostentatious feature, is in fact the *sine qua non* of the experience. This is the "hushing of the external self," the abstraction of the mind from environmental consciousness, in which event the subliminal emerges, suggests, prompts, dominates the consciousness and life, the time being, resulting in new and lofty experiences and sometimes the exercise of latent and otherwise unknown powers.

It was sufficient for the yoga or old-time mystic to experience what he believed to be direct perception of the divine nature and to assume its consistency with his *a priori* views of things. Our age is different. We are hardly content with knowing the fact, but require a reason arrived at through inductive methods, even in a field of experience which transcends reason. It is very true that mystic consciousness is not the result of a process of reasoning, but its explanation may be.

This, as well as other subjects of this series, will be considered in this light of inquiry, and where an explanation may be discerned it will be noted. Besides meeting our modern want in this respect, it has the additional advantage of marking the mode of arrival at the result or experience.

This Experience Identical in Character with the Subliminal of Normal Life.

The experiences of Passive Concentration are at the beginnings of those which have so impressed

ind with the great virtue of silence, introspection, and quiescence, employed in their many ways. These experiences have varied from the ordinary self-consciousness to the transcendent states of inner illumination. From a study of the conditions which are common to all these experiences and a recognition of the intimate relation between the conditions and certain psychic states which we are beginning to understand, we may arrive at a satisfactory reason for their occurrence. When we have thus discovered the reason—the law of the phenomena—we may attain the experience at will by reproducing the conditions.

The Reasons for the Experience Found in the Composite Psychic Character of Man.

The primary reason, as I conceive it from such a study, for all such supernormal or extraordinary experience is to be found in the composite psychic character of man and the nature of those elements. The subliminal and the normal consciousness have been spoken of elsewhere, and in their proper place in this series will be more fully examined. For the present purpose let us indicate in briefest manner a bold sketch of man's constitution according to this understanding.

The scientific method of inquiry is to proceed from the known to the unknown. In this view nothing is to be taken for granted on *a priori* grounds. The known is the normal man. Psychic science has accepted him as the basis of knowledge respecting himself, and from a study of him and his many states has added a knowledge of the supernormal man and of the subliminal consciousness. This having been done in accordance with the requirements of scientific inquiry, philosophy is now at liberty to take the facts for consideration and synthesis. Philosophy is something more than the facts; it is the understanding of them.

Universal Consciousness. Subliminal Consciousness and S

According to these facts, our sketch will be as follows: Out of the Universal Consciousness there is differentiated that quantum which we now call subliminal consciousness of each individual. This is the source of individual existence; the creator, the cause of the personal self. It is the immediate fountain of life, the perpetual youth, the restorer of health and the originator of life forces. It is the seat of power, supernormal faculty, and wisdom. It is the individual's destiny, his divinity, his immortality. It is a state of consciousness which merges into the Universal upon the one hand and emerges into the individual upon the other.

Upon this subliminal consciousness are impressed all the results of its perception of cosmic states—the life-experience of the person. This state of subliminal consciousness, this summation of experience and its effects, together with subliminal faculty, we may call the Subliminal Self. It is the safe treasury of all the results of experience in this life and prior existence. Psychic experiment proves that here nothing is forgotten, though it has faded from the memory of the normal mind long since. Not only do memories of experience persist, but tendencies, habits, virtues and vices are impressed upon its receptive nature by the dominant thought and habit of cosmic life powerfully tend to determine its habitual expression, and modify its state after it has severed its connection with the gross condition of matter.

The Normal Personal Self.

This Subliminal Self is, for the time being, in rapport with the physical environment as we perceive it, and this rapport is effected by means of the physical body. Here is the most outward point of emergence of the subliminal consciousness, and the result is what

know as the normal personal man, the familiar person one knows himself to be.

This normal self is not only the emergence of the Subliminal Self upon the physical plane, but it is that state of consciousness resulting from intense concentration upon the physical environment.

The Explanation.

In view of this conception of man the phenomena of Passive Concentration or the supernormal experience of The Silence, introspection, quiescence, etc., may be readily understood. If one ceases the concentration upon the outward world the consciousness invariably returns to the inner sphere. If the normal consciousness be minimized the subliminal consciousness tends to become dominant. If the normal self be quiescent, the subliminal self merges into and becomes known to the normal with greater ease and certainty. If the consciousness be entirely withdrawn from the physical world for the time being, it will emerge upon the psychic plane.

The normal personal self in the view of modern knowledge is our most important acquisition to the profounder being, and should be perfected for its highest purpose, not suppressed. But we should not make the error of counting it the only state. When we understand that it is but the emergence and concentration of a deeper consciousness which is ever modifying it and in turn being modified by it through what we call the process of evolution, we readily see how important all methods become which facilitate this natural relation and necessary interaction. The methods for one class of which I have taken Passive Concentration as a type are such, and may be given profitable consideration if one wishes to more than drift with the stream of slow progress.

As before suggested, a study of the conditions under which the phenomena of supernormal consciousness

occur discloses the invariable presence of one certain condition. This we find to be the silencing of the normal self, the minimizing the consciousness of external conditions. It is of little importance how this is effected (providing the method be not harmful) whether by intentional or accidental abstraction, or by artifice or some unusual stimulus which carries the consciousness momentarily beyond the pale of the habitual objects of thought and perception. The condition, in whatever way it may arise, is one in which the consciousness of the environmental world ceases to be dominant, and this in itself and for the reason above suggested affords the conditions for another character of experience, another kind of consciousness, the rising at least, if not the domination, of the subliminal states.

Vital Energy Follows Same Law of Expression.

Thus far I have spoken only of the subject of consciousness, but we will find that connected with the expression of consciousness which we familiarly call thought, there are forces which are subject to the same law of expression and to the same explanation. Briefly (for we will consider this point more fully later), the normal condition of mind and activity is one in which there is a continual expression and outward flow of nervous energy. The extent of this surpasses our normal thinking estimation. This is projected largely toward the objects of consciousness by the power of thought. Thus, there is an outward expression and expenditure of psychic force in the direction and in accordance with the nature of our conscious thought. In so far as this should follow a perfected state of living and thought it must undoubtedly be right and beneficent; but unfortunately we have not arrived at that perfected state hence our psychic energy is as wastefully scattered and our thought is undisciplined and inordinate. The result is psychic exhaustion which manifests itself in many ways.

Now, when by some device or chance this intense attention to the external objects of consciousness ceases, this unnecessary and wasteful flow of energy also ceases. This always occurs in quiescent states and may be facilitated by an intelligent understanding and the employment of better method. Though in the quiescent state the energy may still be in expression, it is conserved and adds to the expression-power for higher purposes.

It is not the attainment of these ends by mere fortuitous circumstances which we may desire, but by some purposeful effort and method. We will find Passive Concentration to be such.

Summary.

Thus we have two distinct but co-ordinate results.

First, as to consciousness and its attributes of faculty and wisdom, the effect of such practice is to still the outer or environmental mind, to reverse the currents of thought and turn them back upon the inner sphere of consciousness. The weakening of the rapport with the outer world reduces the consciousness of it to the minimum, and furnishes the conditions for another condition of consciousness which shall be largely determined by the emerging subliminal states. But the normal self is never lost, but receding from the outer sphere it blends with and perceives the emerging subliminal self, cognizing its knowledge and partaking of its transcendent states.

Second, as to psychic energy, the turning back the streams of thought and consciousness directly conserves and gathers to the self the radiating forces with their controlled subtle substances, thus recovering for proper and higher uses possessions of value. These by the power of harmonious thought-direction may be made the agency for rapid and powerful self-healing.

As one proceeds in the practice by regular and conscientious effort, the facility increases by which he becomes able to direct his consciousness away from the

external world and control its character interiorly, the perception of the subliminal states becomes clearer, the memories of forgotten experiences are recalled, the promptings of the deeper self in normal moments are perceived, and one truly begins to find The Self.

The Self of Consciousness.

Historically the existence of this Self, a divine wiser, profounder consciousness overshadowing the normal personality, is found to have been the doctrine of many esoteric philosophies. The gaining of the knowledge of it, or becoming one with it, is still the theme of many an esoteric speculation and effort.

The finding of The Self can come only through deeper or newer knowledge of one's consciousness. This (consciousness) is the basis of all knowledge, all experience, past, present, or future; it is the sum total of all possibilities of self-knowledge. Not that there is nothing to know or learn outside one's consciousness, but that all pertaining to The Self inheres in Consciousness, and that which The Self may know which does not inhere there must first become part of it.

The profounder knowledge of The Self is attained or disclosed in some degree by any of the many methods which shifts the maximum consciousness to another plane without losing the identity with the normal state of self-consciousness. When we shall consider the yoga practice we will find it to be the archetype of all methods of this character. Essentially they are all methods of abstraction from the external objects of consciousness and of the cognition of the evidence including the promptings, intuitions, faculties, and powers of the profounder consciousness.

We should casually note here the fact that all the methods are clearly distinguished in mode and in effect from those sometimes followed which disorganize the normal consciousness while affording submerged impulses the opportunity of usurping the field of future

tion. These latter are detrimental and should be studiously avoided by those who value the sane integration of themselves.

We should remember also in entering the storehouse of experience (recovering the past of experience) that if we break through with violence, or by unnatural means, we are liable to precipitate a confusion of memories and experience-results which will present a composite not altogether desirable or pleasing. Such result follows in some pathological cases and in ill-advised practices.

In considering the Subliminal Consciousness in future numbers, we may note in what degree the ancient or historical conception of The Self is true, and how far the conception must be modified by our new knowledge of psychics.

The Self is a vastly complex synthesis of the sources of our normal consciousness and the results of it which have faded from present memory. Not only this, but somewhere in that complex synthesis is the treasury of the results of all the past not only of these few years of this life, but of prior existence.

How shall we find this Self? I have said that the path is only through the study of individual consciousness, only by turning back upon the submerged sea the attention of the ego, and by following back toward its source the stream of individual consciousness. We may learn that the practice of every system of illumination, of liberation, of union with the divine, has in some degree or manner done this. Those who have used them intelligently have thereby revealed to themselves gleams of subliminal consciousness, and sometimes become unified with their subliminal selves.

Passive Concentration is a method by which knowledge of The Self may be attained without doing violence to the relations with the normal life.

The Self of Psychic Energy.

As before suggested, the elements of The Self comprise more than abstract consciousness, and as here it is therefore more comprehensive than that implied by the experience of the old-time mystic. It includes more than the perception of the states of inner consciousness, more than the experience of the mystic's divine love, more than gleams of higher wisdom. It includes the recognition and recovery for higher conscious use of the subtle forces and substances which are part of the constitution of the vital man—the discovery of one's psycho-vital energy, personal magnetic forces, "od," and the marshalling of the same under the conscious will. So accustomed are we to observing only the obvious in life, that we do not usually discover the subtler things without a personal or special quest.

There must necessarily be little synthetic knowledge regarding an energy, or substance such as referred to, the very existence of which is unknown generally, usually misconceived by the few who recognize it, and until recent years discredited by science. Even the terms applied are so various and vague as to produce general confusion of thought on the subject.

M. Aksakof, an eminent psychic researcher, adopts the general term of Animism to designate its many manifestations. He says it "is neither purely physical in character, nor is confined within the periphery of our bodily forms; but that it can overstep the bounds of the body, and can exert, either within or without the body, activities of a physical, nay, even of a plastic kind." And Dr. von Hartmann calls it "a nervous force, which can produce mechanical and plastic effects outside the human body."

Under this designation the first-named author places psychic phenomena (usually non-volitional) which occur outside the subject's body, as telepathy (thought transference), telekinesis (or movements of objects)

without contact), and some forms of materialization (termed plastic effects).

The manifestation of this energy and substance, in so far as it affects ponderable objects beyond the limits of the body, would seem to be an unnecessary and unregulated expenditure if not an actual waste of a most powerful element of The Self, which, if properly conserved and controlled by the conscious mind, will become a great benefaction. This is the experience of those who give special attention to such conservation.

This energy and substance are the basis of many occult phenomena, both in their thoughtless dissipation and their purposeful use. Through their instrumentality many spiritualistic phenomena are produced. These are sometimes accomplished by the will of the person from whom the power radiates, and often by the will of some other person, usually out of the body. In most instances such expenditure of energy becomes useless and disastrous to the subject.

Again, its effect is perceived in magnetic healing, and here also the expenditure may result to the detriment of the higher possibilities of the subject. It is the part of wisdom not only to know our powers and forces, but to use them rightly, and if we accept the most natural conclusion, namely, that what we evolve is primarily for our individual use, it necessarily follows that thoughtless and purposeful waste, even with altruistic intent, results in abridgement of our higher attainment. How far this power may be given to aid others will properly be discussed in another place.

It is only in rare cases where this psychic element is observed in extravagant degree of manifestation, resulting in great waste; but though not dissipated thus by the majority (and, perhaps, not abundantly possessed in some cases), it is, in some degree, wasted by them through the continuous drain of useless, irrational, emotional, passionate, anxious, remorseful, or sorrowful thought and conduct.

This form of energy is unknown to conventional physiology, unless we class it with nervous force. We could do this, however, only as long as it manifests in connection with nerve-fiber, and when found independent of it, the term evidently would not apply. The latter manifestation is that with which we are more concerned, for the currents move under the direction of the will and independent of nerve channels. The energy in apparent union with a subtle substance may be localized in the body by an effort of the mind, radiates from the hands and eyes and some other parts of the body, and constitutes a sheath or aura around which is visible to clairvoyance and whose presence may be otherwise determined.

Thus we may very properly conceive The Self, knowledge of which we should gain by these methods to be not only states of deeper consciousness, but all the subtle forces and psychic elements which constitute vital expression.

More Comprehensive than Mysticism.

This is an important addition to the aims and purposes of attainment, which has too often and too long been unheeded. Our efforts should be not only to experience deeper consciousness with its illumination, but also to discover and bring under the conscious control for higher purposes these subtle elements of our being. The methods of Passive Concentration are useful for this, because, first, they stop for the time the thoughtless as well as the purposeful waste of psychic energy and furnish the conditions under which its existence in the organism becomes known; and, second, they acquaint one with the knowledge of how the energy is naturally and unconsciously affected by thought, and how it will respond to the conscious direction of the mind.

Thus we may more truly find The Self than did the old-time mystic, who no doubt experienced elevation

consciousness in the expression of lofty love, but was for the most part wholly ignorant of the power of finding, conserving, and directing his psychic energy for health or beneficent ends. In this particular we may properly designate our practice as Mastery as well as Mystic.

Special attention is thus directed to this in order that it may be understood that there are other elements than mere consciousness in this Self, and that it is the purpose of the special practices to discover them to the normal mind and effect their conservation and direct their proper use. When all these drains upon the reservoir of power are stopped, and in the state of concentration this element is held and directed by steadfast and calm will, its power for transformation is great. Thus one may in a few minutes entirely eradicate the causes of developing bodily disorder and completely restore health where disease was unquestionably present. Of this particularly elsewhere.

The Dominant Consciousness.

The rationale of the method will not be fully understood without bearing in mind the following. The consciousness of the normal man is the dominant consciousness in the ordinary state. No true analogy for this and other states can be found, for there is nothing else like consciousness, but the example of the combinations of elements to form substances may be suggestive. Let us use one. Oxygen will be supposed to represent consciousness, and its chemical affinities to represent that characteristic of consciousness referred to as responsiveness. Other elements with which oxygen combines will represent environment. Oxygen alone is pure element (as we would say of abstract consciousness, it is not conditioned). When brought into relation with its combining elements (as consciousness is related to environment) it immediately acts (as consciousness responds) and assumes a new relation, a

changed status (as consciousness assumes a new state resulting in a new distinct substance (as the resultant state of consciousness becomes the normal man) while persists until the combining elements (the environment in the case of consciousness) is changed. But the oxygen remains the same though its manifestations, the new substances (in the case of consciousness, its relations to environment) varies according to combination.

This parallel, though necessarily imperfect because there is nothing truly analogous to consciousness, may be helpful in suggesting how the consciousness assumes specific relations through the faculty of perception and response, and becomes for the time being a limited expression related to a particular state of environment.

This is the condition of our personal consciousness or normal self. The physical surroundings, the thought and conduct of others, all form the environmental elements of which there is perception and to which consciousness responds with an absorbed attention which knows nothing else for the time being. This is the dominant consciousness.

As oxygen has its power of uniting with many elements and forming as many distinct substances, so consciousness has the power of perceiving and responding to many environmental states, and thus giving rise to as many new experiences. Unlike oxygen, however, it has the power of voluntarily abandoning its environmental relations and forming new ones. This is the originative and creative or Godlike quality.

It is this originative and volitional power which we use in all efforts at Mastery and in Concentration. We withdraw the consciousness from the contemplation of the environment which has dominated its character and seek, or allow to supervene, new relations, and hence create a new state of consciousness.

Method. Life Habits.

When we shall study the subliminal consciousness

we will learn the origin and philosophy of habit. It is sufficient to say here that it is a corollary of the law of response and of memory. Arising from an infinitely varied combination of influences to which the ego has responded repeatedly, habit becomes for most persons a rule of conduct and thought. It belongs to the so-called automatic acts in which the normal consciousness only partially participates. There are many automatic functions which are invaluable to us, but such as are here referred to are harmful. The reason for this character is to be found in the fact that the process by which they are formed is not governed by wisdom or rationality. The active methods for their correction properly belong to Active Concentration; we will speak here of the reclamation of The Self more particularly through passive methods.

All physical acts are mental acts: it is impossible to have the one which is the result, without the other which is the cause. A very large number of physical acts have become automatic, that is, they are superintended by the subliminal consciousness or self, thus leaving other segments of consciousness (the normal) free to think and to contemplate other subjects. This is the method of division of labor by which advancement is made possible. But among these so-called automatic acts there are all sorts of habits above referred to, which are useless and often detrimental. The perpetuation of these is not only irrational, but diffusive of Mind and wasteful of its opportunities and power as well as of the vital and psychic energy. In this manner useless and wasteful tasks are imposed upon the Subliminal Mind or Self. It is made a slave to irrational habit, and being so enthralled we do not secure its uses or powers where we should, nor for the higher purposes of existence.

It is to reclaim this Mind that we should give proper attention to this field of endeavor, which no doubt to the mass appears inconsequential, but

accomplishment in which will contribute much to attainment.

These habits are the result of wrong and irrational mentation, and in order to correct them, one need only study himself in expression, and, noting where they exist, bring to bear his corrective thought, inhibiting such action whenever the tendency arises, and directing it in the proper manner, if action be necessary. Besides rationalizing expression, this will at once release these segments of mind from their useless tasks and make them available for proper use and realization. This practice is no more than accessory to specific methods. For the correction of these defects and those of the disordered and chaotic mind, the methods of active concentration or of the enthronement of the will and the higher mind are equally applicable.

Other life methods, as the purification of thought and act, the creation of higher ideals, the habitual recognition of beneficent intent in life, properly belong to another branch of our inquiry, though they affect radically the results obtained in this practice. This is because this method is the revealing one, and discloses what we habitually build into The Self. One who hopes to experience the greatest benefits from the practice must have due regard for all the factors involved in the result.

The Purpose of Method. Some Ancient Devices.

The purpose, then, will be to furnish those best conditions which will enable (1) the normal consciousness to recede from the contemplation of the usual objects of attention; (2) the easy emergence of the subliminal consciousness into the normal field; and (3) the recovery and holding for higher uses the segments of mind and psychic forces uselessly employed, divided, and wasted.

Note that one or more of these results are attained when suitable conditions are furnished, whatever may

be the method employed or the philosophy prompting it. The practice of crystal gazing, which will be examined elsewhere, is simply a device for abstracting the mind from normal subjects, for minimizing the consciousness of the external world, under which conditions forgotten experiences conserved in the deeper consciousness become known again, and telepathic knowledge reaching the inner plane from other minds emerges and is manifested in the normal consciousness. The ancient practice of gazing steadily at the thumb-nail, into a well or a placid pool or bowl of water, upon a jewel, a black substance, a metal, etc., resulted similarly and for like reasons.

The Quietist's Formula.

But more interesting to us are the methods by which the old-time mystic attained a knowledge of his super-normal states. Fortunately, we have a brief and excellent example to be found in the works of Simeon the Younger, Abbot of Xerocerce, a Greek ecclesiastical writer of the Eleventh Century, who formulated the practice of Quietism thus. I give the translation just as it quaintly appears in an ancient folio of Du Pin :

"In the first place, three things are to be practiced in order to attain to what you desire, viz: The Contempt of All Rational and Irrational Creatures, Mortification and a pure Conscience, free from all manner of Passions and particular Interests. Afterwards, sitting alone in Tranquility in a corner of your cell, do what I am now about to tell you. Keeping your Door shut, lift up your Mind above all Vanities—that is to say, above all temporary and transitory Things, and bowing your Head hold your Breath; seek your Heart in Mind. At first you'll find thick Darkness, but by continuing this practice Day and Night you will discover Wonders and meet with endless Consolation; for when the Mind has once found out the place of the Soul, it clearly perceives things which it never compre-

hended before ; it discerns air around about the Heart and becomes altogether Luminous and full of Wisdom and when a Man is arrived to that height of Perfection if any evil Thought intervenes, it is expelled and immediately disappears before it can make any impression. You can learn the rest with God, by preserving Jesus Christ in your Heart."

This is not quoted for the purpose of approval, but as an example of a typical method, from which we may eliminate all the unnecessary elements, the personal opinion and the special philosophy of its writer and find that it still contains the necessary conditions for disclosing supernormal consciousness.

A Modern Method.

I Preliminary Considerations

We may lay aside all unnaturalness of method and imperfection of philosophy and for a specific effort proceed as follows :

In adopting a practice it should be followed with regularity, for first, such a plan is an excellent training of The Self ; second, the subliminal self responds with facility in accordance with the law of periodicity, and third, advancement is thus appreciable, though it should not be doubted that any effort brings its exact and inevitable result.

At first select surroundings suitable, that is, those which will assist in the attainment. We are to such an extent creatures of environment that this is advisable. It is quite true that one who has acquired the practice or who has given much attention to the active method may disregard surroundings, but the best results are obtained by minimizing the effects of distracting influences upon the attention.

Choose an hour when least liable to demands, and select a room where no one will intrude. Presuming that the time and place will afford a degree of exemption from the sights and sounds of external life, the effort required to abstract the mind will be correspond-

ingly less. It is desirable at first to use unobjectionable artifice to enable one to recover with ease all the Mind for this attainment. A mellow light or very low one will minimize the consciousness of light vibrations and reduce the tendency to use the eyes.

As far as possible all restraint should be removed from the body. Garments should be so arranged as to afford unimpeded circulation and respiration, the free use of the muscles of the chest and abdomen. There should be no binding around the waist. All matters of dress tending to discomfort should be remedied.

II. Posture.

The next consideration is the posture, as the Yoga terms it; the position of the body. As we are now considering passive states, the posture should be one requiring the least effort to overcome the consciousness of it. Natural preferences differ. The Oriental practice of sitting upon the floor or cushion, with limbs folded inward, the body erect, hands resting on the knees, palms down and fingers extended, is the best if it can be adopted without inconvenience. Those who do not find this position comfortable may adopt some other. If it can be used it has some advantages: the body is most easily supported, the liability to sleep is minimized, and the position of the extremities aids in conserving the auric radiations.

Another position may be taken in a chair, feet resting easily on floor, hands as above stated, and body erect and back free from the chair. A reclining position may afford rest, but it is not favorable for this practice and its results.

With these suggestions in view each should select that attitude which is easiest and most comfortable, as by so doing less mind will be employed in the recognition of discomfort and in overcoming it, thus recovering more for our specific purpose.

It is well to close the eyes in order that the visible evidences of surroundings may not hold any part of the mind, even though the attention be unconscious.

III. The Right Attitude of Mind.

You are at the threshold of another condition, and how you enter and what kind of experience you will have, will depend much upon the specific attitude of mind at this point. We might well refer to Simeon's directions to make the conscience pure and "free from all manner of passion and particular interest." At any rate, you should begin to shut out from the mind the remembrance of the transitory and imperfect existence by dismissing every unkind, resentful and uncharitable thought which the vicissitudes of the day may have suggested, and relate yourself to the realities of existence by assuming an attitude of kindness and universal love for the good of every one, of the whole world, and of the Universal Being.

Give special heed to this : maintain in thought and consciousness the perfect inviolability of The Self. Do not entertain even a submerged desire that your condition shall be influenced by any other being. Do not invite the interference of any person, not even a master. Realize to the fullest extent that no one can attain for you. All pretenses to do so are the promptings of unwisdom ; therefore do not invite any one to trespass upon your condition, your mind or your soul. Let your whole purpose be to realize your Self ; through that and not through another is the door to knowledge of the divine.

IV. Relaxation—Mental and Physical.

Begin the process of reclaiming the Mind : the first step is relaxation. Commence with the mental consciousness and release the mind's attention from all with which it has been engaged. An active mind cannot at once become quiescent ; it is not an easy matter to dismiss a thought at will. The method to be followed is that of substitution ; change the tenor by the

selection of a new subject for contemplation. You may thus lead the mind by successive steps where it would be impossible to carry it at one effort. The mental attitude assumed will be in accordance with the suggestions in the last section. Further relaxation of mind will be accomplished by dismissing the specific *forms* of thought in this same field, and merging the consciousness in one general concept, which will become an undifferentiated state.

Relax the body, maintaining a sitting posture. Mentally note each portion and thoroughly relax every muscle thereof. You will find that many are contracted and in a state of unnecessary tension, which, though habitual, is not recognized by the normal consciousness. This is the result of useless and harmful habits—of irrational thought. Release all these and thus recover this quantum of mind which will add to the realization in the state you are seeking to enter. It should not be imagined that because one is unconscious normally of these contractions that they do not waste mind. There are no physical tensions which are not the result of mental action, either conscious, semi-conscious, or sub-conscious.

By this relaxation you will have released much of the subliminal mind from useless tasks and enabled it to manifest for higher purposes. Every uncomfortable condition, every recognition of an external condition or relation, every unnecessary muscular tension, requires attention of the mind consciously or unconsciously exerted. Therefore, when we remove these causes of mind-division, we recover that much of The Self. We gather into one great stream (so to speak) all these small streams of thought and vital energy which have been drawing away and dividing consciousness and psychic energy.

V. Abstraction

The process or method throughout the early stages is one of abstraction or turning back from the external

world, the reports of the senses, the recognition of environmental conditions, physical or otherwise; complete withdrawal of thought (both as a recognizing and as a purpose) from all the external world.

Light and its evidences have been shut out; if sound remains to call the consciousness outward, you will abstract the mind from it. Direct from it the conscious attention, or recognition. Treat all other elements of distraction in the same manner. This mental abstraction cannot be accomplished by continuing to recognize the causes of disturbance, as by thinking of them, indulging in irritation, or by encouraging the consciousness of annoyance. It is accomplished only by directing the conscious attention to something else, to another subject of contemplation. In this particular instance the subject will be the effort at concentration, applied as the development of the methods requires.

VI. Breath.

Having given attention to these directions one may take the deep rhythmic breathings. Inhale slowly and deeply, but instead of using wholly the chest expansion let the lungs expand downward and the abdomen outward to give room. Retain the breath, and then slowly exhale, drawing the abdominal muscles in as far as possible and expelling the breath gently and evenly. Let the ratio of time for these three be as 2 : 3 : 1. Repeat the breathing rhythmically. With the inhalation hold the thought of breathing in the universal energy which comes to you. Do not concentrate the thought in the brain, but direct it downward when inhaling, as though you would follow the course of the breath, but carry the thought onward to the solar plexus.

As the psychic aura is largely controlled in expression by both breathing and thought, you will soon find that this effort will have the effect of gathering in the outward radiations and placing the force partially under the direction of the will. Continue the breathings for

from three to five minutes. After this measured breathing pay no further attention to the effort, but let the subliminal self carry on the process as usual without volition.

VII. Self-Concentration.

Upon ceasing you will have not only gathered and conserved added psychic force, but the mind will have been calmed and trained for the next effort—that of quieting the confusion of thought which ordinarily usurps the mental field, and of bringing it into *one state*. Here you will use some degree of active concentration, but the effort should be active only far enough to rule out the undisciplined thoughts that intrude, and to hold to one central conception.

In ordinary states the consciousness is engaged with environment and its effects upon The Self. This has its beneficent ends, but it also results in an unconscious projection of psychic-energy outward. We have reached the point in practice where the reverse of this occurs, the effect of which will be perceived. You have minimized this outward attention, released the consciousness from the hypnotic control of environmental suggestion, and to this extent arrested the outward flow of these forces. Turn them inward to The Self with all the power of calm attention. To accomplish this you may not so much think as *feel*. The mental effort necessary will be only that which is required to turn the consciousness away from the multitude of undisciplined thoughts and to center it upon the one desired—the inner consciousness. Let this consciousness of the inner self be the lodestar of attention to which the thought is ever persistently but gently directed. If the thought strays from this simply bring it back without delay. Do not, however, plunge yourself into an excessive mental state: let the effort be just sufficient to accomplish the desired end, and make that the consciousness of feeling the inner self. There may have been such a persistent habit of external consciousness.

that this feeling spoken of may be but faint at first, but effort and practice will make it very perceptible. This will be a first step toward checking the waste of psychic energy, and becoming conscious of The Self.

Observing these directions, concentrate the whole consciousness in feeling The Self simply as a whole and without reference to environment of any character. Let the consciousness flow into the feeling.

When this shall have been fairly well accomplished, localise this consciousness in the various portions of the organism, beginning with the solar plexus. Try to feel there and nowhere else. A little practice will enable you to localize the consciousness largely here at will, the effect of which will be to greatly increase the vital powers and establish a healthy radiation from that very important nervous and psychic center. This may become known as a perceptible sensation of an internal psychic activity at the point of concentration and indicates greatly increased vitality as well as psychic activity, and has sometimes been referred to as the "fire."

Recall for a moment another of Simeon's directions "Seek the Heart in Mind;" that is, localize the mind consciousness or this consciousness of The Self, in the region of the heart; be conscious there and nowhere else. Or, instead, select the brain as a whole. This consciousness will soon supplant that of the body or its members, and will become deeper and fuller and free from the bodily limitations, the consciousness of which will disappear. The self-consciousness is never for a moment relinquished, impaired, or lost, but merges with and partakes of the knowledge and experience of the Subliminal Self.

At first the exercise may be continued for from twenty to thirty minutes, and when facility in the practice shall have been attained a greater length of time may be employed. In no case should fatigue or a negative condition be induced.

Immortality, Preexistence and Memory.

PHILOSOPHICALLY, the idea of immortality is as fundamental as that of eternity; but not immortality of any special state of consciousness or personality. This is well, for otherwise we would have an eternity of non-progress, an immortality of imperfection. Who would truly wish to make immortal all the errors and undeveloped conditions which constitute personality? These, though playing so prominent a part in the life which we live, and valued so highly by many as the distinguishing characteristics to which they became attached, are nevertheless transitory, and often change within the short span of life. But such is no argument against the permanence of the enduring element in man. The majority have no abiding confidence, no deeply-grounded conviction that this element does exist. Philosophical deductions have little cogency with them, accustomed, as they are, to fully realize only that which is made obvious by experience. Therefore, the problem of continuity of life, in as far as it relates to existence prior to the present physical embodiment, must remain a matter of speculation, and though the probability of after-existence may become the subject of satisfactory demonstration, it still may not be conclusive in favor of immortality in the absence of the appreciation of philosophical sanctions. Let us note briefly how the subject stands.

In the first place, it may be said that immortality is not susceptible of absolute demonstration, is not provable, but that continuity of life is. Immortality is as impossible of absolute demonstration as is eternity; they are one and the same problem, and can only be *inferred*. The impossibility arises from the very nature of the problem. One might have a continued consciousness for millions of æons, but that would be only inferential proof that it would continue eternally.

But continuity of life is quite a different problem and that is what is meant in common parlance by the term immortality. It is susceptible of proof. Physical science has made marvelous progress in the last century; psychical science will outstrip it in the coming one. The past quarter century has laid an enduring foundation for intelligent and untrammelled study and comprehension of the potential characteristics of the soul, their subliminal manifestation, and phenomena supposedly of some states of consciousness which succeed physical death. Many careful, competent students and investigators are confident, beyond a doubt, of the continuity of life beyond the physical embodiment, and believe they have learned much about the conditions of that life. As it is believed that all life is continuous, and those states which succeed death are conditioned by the life in the body, this knowledge will form the basis for a stable and certain religion, or philosophy of life, which will commend itself to the future man as honesty, morality, and rectitude do to us as guides in this special life.

There is an occasional investigator, and one of pronounced attainments in other directions, who finds it difficult to come to an affirmative conclusion after considering the evidence. We have the same mental phenomenon in all branches of thought, the person possibly laboring under an *idée fixe* which usurps the mental field and will not surrender, no difference how cogent the evidence. We must remember, too, that the personal equation enters into the determination of such a question, just as in all others, and what appears satisfactory or convincing to one may not necessarily be so to another. The amount of prejudice or prejudgment which each one brings to the consideration, and which requires evidence to remove, will vary from that of all others, and hence the same evidence can rarely produce the same effect upon two investigators.

It is therefore inconsiderate to expect unvarying agreement under the circumstances.

From continued existence we may infer indefinitely extended continuation of life, and if this be conceived as endless, we may infer for ourselves immortality.

Here another difficulty arises to perplex the mind, which, when it has settled one end of the problem, finds that its conclusion involves another proposition therefore unthought of, namely, *preëxistence*. The average mind imagines a beginning and an end of everything, because objective experience teaches that so far as present consciousness is concerned things begin and end. It is not realized that present consciousness is related to but a few changing forms, to a very small segment of the circle of eternity. It is inferred that experience in the present covers the whole of consciousness, and it is found difficult to realize the philosophical and fundamental necessity for no beginning and no ending.

States may have a beginning and an ending, but the essential entity which knows those states neither begins nor ends. Nothing can be added to or subtracted from the ultimate universe; if it could be, the universe would not be eternal. Its eternity is a necessary concept, the opposite of which is unthinkable. But it does not follow that the personality, or even the individual as known at any moment of time, has always existed as that summation of consciousness. Life as a whole has evolved from most simple to gradually increasing complex states of consciousness, and if re-embodiment be a fact of nature the individual has traveled the long and progressive road which has marked the evolution of life as a whole.

There is another difficulty in the way; one cannot remember preëxistence, hence it never was. It cannot be settled upon that ground, as we will see.

First, it may be stated that preëxistence does not necessarily carry with it the theory of existence in physical bodies, or of states of consciousness entirely similar to the bodily one, or of life under exactly similar environment. But from all the facts at present

available, and from the study of physical and psychic evolution, the logical conclusion suggests preëxistence for some period of time as individuals and in successive embodiments here or in other environments.

But it is contended that one does not remember such. Before forming a conclusion upon this premise it will be well to consider the results of modern psychic research, to learn the facts about consciousness and memory in this new light, and especially bear in mind the fact that beneath the waking consciousness there is a wealth of memory and faculty which is wholly unknown to the normal self.

Consciousness, and not memory, is fundamental. Memory is a mere temporary state of consciousness related to a particular environment or experience; it may merge in consciousness and be lost as memory. But consciousness persists, though it may become moulded into new memories which exclude for the time the specific old ones, but which old ones may be evoked again. The normal self is but a chain of such memories, a mere segment of a profounder consciousness, related to a few years of experience with a specific environment. If then the normal self knows only *itself*, though it is demonstrated that there are other "chains of memory" beneath it, such is no argument against the preëxistence of the same consciousness related to another time and environment, the memory of which survives only as a result summed up in character, faculty, predilection.

One thinks that he does not remember preëxistence. He may not recall any "distinct chain of memories" connected therewith, neither may he recall such chains of memories connected with the greater part of the life which he knows he has lived in this body. But while he is unable to do this, he does realize the result of memory, in the character and propensities which he brings ready formed into this bodily existence. Memory has ceased to be individual and segregated, but lives

as a homogeneous whole, and we call it character in man and instinct in animals.

But there is no argument more delusive than that based upon a want of memory. Psychic experiment has shown that though memory is entirely lost to the normal self, it still exists in the subliminal consciousness, and may be evoked in a secondary personality or phase of the same individual. It has been shown that the hysteric or the hypnotic subject who has lost all perception of sensation over parts of the body as well as the special senses, really does feel and hear and see by a deeper consciousness, though his normal self is not aware of it at all. It is also true that often at the point of transition the consciousness will recall long forgotten incidents, trifling and insignificant though true facts, unused and forgotten language of early years. Imminent danger suggesting death opens again the sealed volumes of memory and discloses the vanished past in vivid detail. Concentration enables the recovery of much that otherwise disappears. In view of such evidence the argument against preëxistence based upon want of memory can have little weight.

But it may be insisted that while psychic experiment has recovered memories of the present life it has never disclosed the memories of preëxistence. This may not be as evident as it appears. Distinct memories of individual events of a prior life may not be satisfactorily identified, but the recovery through psychic experiment of characteristics and faculties of the ego, which have no relation to the present life, has been accomplished. Whence did they come?

The facts regarding the composite and extremely complex character of consciousness will give further pause to him who hastily concludes against preëxistence because of non-memory. Psychic phenomena have shown that the sources of the normal consciousness, when brought into dominance, manifest the characteristics of distinct personalities with distinct chains of

memories not necessarily connected, and entirely unknown to the normal self. (I do not refer to "controls.") It is not suggested that these are distinct entities, but that they are segments of consciousness which hold memories and tendencies distinct from the normal self. If this be true of this life in the body we can no longer urge the lack of memory to discredit the theory of preëxistence.

These segments can in no sense be supposed to be the specially-surviving elements of man. We would expect to find that element to be the individuality which is the summation of them all, and of which they are but temporary manifestations. Immortality is its essential nature, and this includes preëxistence.

THE exercise of occult or supernormal power involves no intermediary; it need not be done in the name nor by the permission of another. The power and act are individual and original, for they flow from that element of The Self which inheres in the Universal and divine, and in close relation to which every soul stands. When that rapport is dominant, then supernormal knowledge and power are exercised.

The use of a name which inspires awe, reverence, and supreme confidence, as well as formulas which arouse the latent states, have been employed, and are supposed to be the warrant by which the powers are exercised; but such belief arises from a misconception of the true relation between the means used and the result attained. These are not warrants by virtue of which the results are secured, but only means of inducing the special psychological conditions within the person whereby the results become possible. They are indirect methods. We should learn to be the masters, and go directly in thought and practice to the source of all knowledge and power.

THE last analysis of sensation is perception, cognition. There are not several senses, but only one—*awareness*—but that one is manifested in diverse ways through diverse channels.

Think not of yourself as possessing distinct senses as though they could be added to or subtracted from you, but as an ego with one universal sense, awareness. This is necessary to the realization of yourself as a unity and to the knowledge of yourself as you are, not as the phenomenal world tends to deceive you into thinking.

Each channel of sense is only one of the specialized methods by which the soul consciously relates itself to its environments. These specialized methods have been evolved as the result of the soul's response to a special condition of environment. The soul could evolve others, and no doubt will; those already evolved are largely to meet the perils of physical environment. Awareness lies back of them all and may be otherwise specialized into other avenues, or "senses," or, under proper conditions, may become independent of such necessity, and then the person perceives, becomes aware, though no ordinary "sense" is used.

The transposition of the senses which occurs in some psychic phenomena, whereby the subject "sees" apparently by the means of the fingers; the exteriorization of sensation where perception is independent of bodily limitations or special organs of sense; the psychometric faculty which cognizes soul-conditions without the aid of ordinary means of perception; these, with other similar facts, inform us that we are not the sense-limited beings we imagine ourselves to be.

The thorough appreciation of this will greatly aid in realizing the central and unified character of the soul and its self-sufficiency, as well as its relations to environments, not only our sensible world, but more subtle spheres.

THE soul is potentially divine. To realize its divinity and individualize its highest expression is the tendency of existence. We are, and ever have been (though not always apparent to ourselves) evolving this ideal held in the deeper consciousness.

Occasionally a brighter light from the deeper wisdom illumines the mind, and suggests a surer way of life, a quicker means of attaining the end. Such is the inspiration of Freedom. He who can divest himself of the limitations of the bondage under which the mental life of the world labors, has the key to great possibilities. The soul thus freed may come speedily and naturally into perceptive relations with truth, and enter into its realization.

Likewise, he who masters, finds himself rapidly advancing toward the goal, for it is not simply a way to unfoldment, but the unfoldment itself. The overcoming the lower nature is not essentially a contest with an unfavorable condition, tendency, or memory, but the origination, and the active incorporation into the life, of the higher ideals, thoughts, and purposes whereby the lower are supplanted. Mastery includes not only the moulding of the normal expression of life, but a recognition of the supernormal possibilities, and the progressive realization of them.

The broader conceptions of existence assist in realization. He who has the true conception of the Now, controls the future, and has the power of modifying as will the results of the past. He knows, too, that in his pilgrimage he is under the law of moral and ethical causation, and that every act or thought has an inevitable effect; that he is the creator of the powers, good or bad, which accompany him. With this knowledge, and the wisdom to heed it, there are no false expectations or delusive beliefs as to the result of conduct, but the surest stimulus to endeavor which can be conceived, namely, the sense of absolute justice.